

was the request of Peter de la Mare before the Estates of the Keahn,¹ and, for the time, there was no one to gainsay him. That night, according to the report of his enemies, the Duke of Lancaster held consultation with his friends and determined to bow to the storm. Hoping to save himself by a temporary desertion of his subordinates, whom it was proposed to impeach, he next morning appeared among the members of the House of Commons, addressed them personally with encouraging and friendly words, and declared himself ready to correct whatever abuses they pointed out.²

The impeachment was commenced. Richard Lyons, the great London merchant who had turned his place on the Privy Council to such advantage, was accused by the Commons' Speaker, and found guilty by the Lords, of the various financial and commercial frauds which he had committed. He endeavoured to save himself by a judicious distribution of the masses of wealth which by these malpractices he had accumulated. A barrel filled with gold was sent across the Thames to the Palace of Kenningkm, where the Black Prince lay dying, but the bribe was refused with contumely. In other quarters, it was said, his offers were better received, and this was the only reason why he escaped the capital punishment for which the public voice clamoured. He was condemned to a heavy fine, deprived of the franchise of London, and committed to prison at the King's pleasure.¹

But the central interest of Parliament, the real test of the strength of parties, was the trial of Lord Laiimer, the biggest game at which the Commons dared to fly. Besides the financial peculations of which he had been guilty at home, he was charged by Peter de la Mare with the more serious treachery of receiving money from the national enemy in return for the betrayal of two strongholds in the north of France, named St. Sauveur and Bechere. As sufficient evidence could not be produced to secure judgment on the question, the sale of these fortresses must remain for ever one of the unsolved mysteries of the past. The circumstances of the trial, as related by a chronicler hostile to the accused, are

¹ *Hot. Parl.*, ii 323.

* *Gfoon. Anff.*, 74 6.

• *Ibid.* 79, 892, and lxx ; Wals., i. S3i;
Bo*. P<*rZ.» ii 823-4,